>

Title: Protest march at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi by employees of Regional Rural Banks demanding benefits of Pension and Provident Fund at par with Public sector Banks.

SHRIMATI JHANSI LAKSHMI BOTCHA (BOBBILI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to raise an important issue concerning 70,000 officers and employees of the Regional Rural Banks in the country. They are in New Delhi holding a protest at Jantar Mantar demanding parity with the public sector banks on retiral benefits, pension and PF.

The National Industrial Tribunal Award in the year 1990 had extended them the pay-scales, allowances and all benefits on par with those the sponsor banks. The Apex Court reiterated the Tribunal Award on 31$^{st}$ January, 2001 and 7$^{th}$ March, 2002. But the Government has, so far, not extended the parity of superannuation benefits. The Government is yet to exempt the RRBs from EPF Act, 1952 as recommended by umpteen Committees. These banks have been earning profits for the last seven years, and are extending services to about ten crore poor customers also in the rural areas. Their demand for parity in all aspects is genuine, and I appeal, through you, Sir, to the hon. Finance Minister to end this discrimination immediately.